



# The Rail Gunner Monthly



VOLUME 1

THE RAIL GUNNER MONTHLY

ISSUE 11

## Inside this issue

Message from RG6/RG7	2
Marksmanship	3
Emergency detonation	4
Warrior's blood	6
Promotions and Re-up	9

## The Rail Gunner



### Monthly Staff

#### Commander

COL John C. Thomson, III

#### Command Sgt. Maj.

CSM Kelvin A. Hughes

#### Rail Gunner PAO

#### NCOIC

SSG Kyle Richardson

#### Rail Gunner Journalists

SGT Lucas Hoskins

SPC Dalinda Salazar



**41st Fires Brigade**

**"Rail Gunners!!"**



Photo by Spc. Dalinda Salazar, 41st Fires Brigade PAO

Staff Sgt. Nicholas Klein, a native of Iowa Park, Texas and a multiple launch rocket systems section chief for Battery A, 2nd Battalion, 20th Field Artillery Regiment, steadies himself in the kneeling position as he aims his M16A2 rifle during the 41st Fires Brigade marksmanship competition at the North Fort Hood Delta Rifle Range, here, Aug. 18. Rifle and pistol shooters from throughout the brigade were selected to compete to see who are the best marksman in the 41st Fires Brigade.

## 41st Fires Bde. marksmanship competition

Story and photos by  
Spc. Dalinda Salazar  
41st Fires Brigade, PAO

The best rifle and pistol shooters from the 41st Fires Brigade competed to see who was the best marksman in the brigade at the North Fort Hood Delta Rifle Range, Fort Hood, Texas, Aug. 18.

The competition tested shooting skills with M4/M16A2 semi-automatic rifles and M9 pistols. The competition also featured a com-

bined event where the participants shot both rifles and pistols.

The competition was comprised of teams from each of the three battalions in the brigade along with a fourth team made up of Soldiers from the separate batteries. Shooters competed as teams and also as individuals to determine the best marksman in the brigade.

"My unit chose me to represent them in front of brigade," said Spc.

See SHOOTING on Page 3

# RAIL GUNNER 6 & 7 SEND



**Colonel**

**John C. Thomson, III**  
41st Fires Brigade

## Dear Rail Gunner family:

The Rail Gunner Brigade had a phenomenal month of training during August and we are extremely proud of the many achievements of our magnificent Soldiers and Noncommissioned Officers. At the request of our Soldiers, our NCOs planned and executed a highly successful Rail Gunner Marksmanship competition. Soldiers were able to display their individual and team skills, firing both the M9 pistol and M16A2 rifle. While the competition was tough and all the participants excelled, there could only be one winning team for each event. The rifle team winner was 2-20 FA, comprised of SGT Brunk (Coach), SSG Cajahdab, SSG Klein, SPC Jenner and PV2 Houska. The 589<sup>th</sup> BSB team won both the pistol and combined events. Its members included CPL Ashburn (Coach), 1LT Weiss, 2LT Harris, SPC Dixon, and PFC Monte. Individual winners were SPC Jenner – Rifle (2-20 FA), 1LT Swears – Pistol (1-21 FA), and 1LT Weiss – Combined (589<sup>th</sup> BSB). Both 2-20 FA and 589<sup>th</sup> BSB earned a 100% on their semi-annual III Corps Environment Compliance inspections, demon-

strating their commitment to sound ecological practices. Finally, all brigade units received laudatory feedback from the 1st Cavalry Division on three separate inspections in diverse areas such as physical fitness, deployment readiness, and personnel management systems.

On the individual front, several Rail Gunners also achieved excellence. First, SFC Baxter (575 FSC, 1-21 FA) completed the Senior Leaders Course (SLC) at Fort Lee, VA, earning both the Distinguished Honor Graduate and the Lead Motivator awards. Also, 2LT Mathew Hester (1-21 FA) earned the coveted Expert Field Medical Badge (EFMB) during the 1 Cavalry Division's demanding EFMB evaluation that had a less than 10% qualification rate. Finally, PFC Angela Rodriguez (67th FSC, 2-20 FA) was selected to join the 1st Cavalry Division Band as a vocalist after a tough audition. We salute these magnificent troopers that inspire excellence in our ranks!

In support of comprehensive fitness, Soldiers and Families were afforded several opportunities during August to enrich themselves in mind, body, and spirit. Over 50 couples attended two-day Strong Bonds marriage enrichment seminars in San Antonio and in Austin, while 50 troopers enjoyed a two-day Single Soldier Strong Bonds spiritual fitness retreat in San Antonio. Our new Brigade Chaplain, Major Joseph Viera, in conjunction with 2-20 FA also hosted an extremely inspiring Brigade Spiritual Fitness Luncheon at Club Hood for 300 Rail Gunners.

A warm welcome is in order for several senior leaders that joined the brigade last month. LTC Pat Everett began service as the Brigade Deputy Commanding Officer, while CPT J.D. Moffitt assumed command of the Brigade Headquarters Battery and CPT Eric Robertson assumed command of the 324<sup>th</sup> Network Signal Company. 1-21 FA welcomed SGM Johnny Williams as their new Operations Sergeants Ma-



**Command Sergeant Major**  
**Kelvin Hughes**  
41st Fires Brigade CSM

for and 1SG Walter Joseph as their new Headquarters Battery First Sergeant. In 2-20 FA, SGM Darrin James took over as their Operations Sergeants Major.

The next few months are extremely busy as the brigade conducts a lengthy field training exercise for the last 3 weeks of September. From October thru December we will continue either field training or computer simulation exercises, but not over any of the long weekends: Columbus Day, Veterans, Day, or Thanksgiving. Additionally, October 25<sup>th</sup> has been designated as a Brigade training holiday as compensatory time with the opportunity to enjoy outdoor activities at BLORA, weather permitting.

The safety and well-being of our Soldiers and Families remains our highest priority, and it requires a team effort. We ask that all of you watch out for your battle buddies, family, friends, and units, especially over the long Labor Day weekend. Through our collective focus on discipline, high standards, and comprehensive fitness, we are

**Rail Gunner Strong!**

*The "Rail Gunner Monthly" is an authorized publication for members of the U.S. Army. Contents of the "Rail Gunner Monthly" are not necessarily official views of or endorsed by the U.S. Government, Department of Defense, Department of the Army or the 41st Fires Brigade. All editorial content of this publication is prepared, edited, provided and approved by the 41st Fires Brigade Public Affairs Office. If you have any questions, comments, concerns or suggestions contact the 41st Fires Brigade PAO office at 254-287-0739 or email [kyle.richardson@conus.army.mil](mailto:kyle.richardson@conus.army.mil). Check out the unit's Website at <http://www.hood.army.mil/41stFires> or on Facebook for additional information.*



**SHOOTING, cont. from Page 1**

Michael Thom, Nicholasville, Ky. native and multiple launch rocket systems gunner with the Battery A, 2nd Battalion, 20th Field Artillery Regiment. "It is nice to be able to get out here with people in battalion and do a team competition."

Rifle participants were issued 80 rounds of ammunition to fire from various distances and positions. Pistol shooters were given 60 rounds and the combined competitors were issued 30 rifle rounds and 20 pistol rounds.

"It was a good competition and I had a lot of fun," said Staff Sgt. Gabriel Rivera a native of San Antonio and a MLRS section chief for Battery B, 2nd Bat., 20th Field Artillery Regt. "I was excited when I got

nominated and came out for rehearsal to see how we will be firing."

The rifle shooters shot targets from 100-300 meters and from 50 meter marks. The pistol shooters shot from the 50 meter and 25 meter marks.

"I tried my best and think I did well today," said Spc. Joshua Martin a native of Jacksboro, Tenn. and forward observer for Headquarter and Headquarter Battery, 41st Fires Bde. "The competition was tough so I am excited to see who won."

The targets included 3 to 5 point zones. The winners received the Army Commendation Medal, a 1st Cav. Div. coin, a 41st Fires Bde. coin, and a four-day pass.



The shooting team for the 1st Battalion, 21st Field Artillery Regiment, shoot their M16A2 rifles during the 41st Fires Brigade marksmanship competition at the North Fort Hood Delta rifle range here, Aug. 18. The marksmanship competition measured both individual and group scores to see who the best shooters are.



Staff Sgt. Nicholas Klein, a native of Iowa Park, Texas and a multiple launch rocket systems section chief for Battery A, 2nd Battalion, 20th Field Artillery Regiment, prepares himself and aims his M16A2 semi-automatic rifle during the 41st Fires Brigade marksmanship competition at the North Fort Hood Delta rifle range here, Aug. 18. Rifle and pistol shooters throughout the brigade were selected to compete for the best marksman.

# Results for the 41st Fires Bde. Marksmanship Competition

## Best Rifle Marksmanship with 286 out of 350 points

*Spc. Thomas Jenner*

—2-20th FA

## Best M9 Marksmanship with 294 out of 300 points

*1st Lt. Jordan Spears*

—1-21th FA

## Best M16A2 Rifle Team

*2-20th FA*

### **Team Coach:**

*Sgt. Jeremy Brunk*

### **Team:**

*Staff Sgt. Ferininand Cajahdab*

*Staff Sgt. Nicholas Klein*

*Spc. Thomas Jenner*

*Pvt. Travis Honska*

## Best Combined Team

*589th BSB*

### **Team Coach:**

*Cpl. Eric Ashburn*

### **Team:**

*1st Lt. Brandon Weiss*

*2nd Lt. Bryan Harris*

*Spc. Kevin Dixon*

*Pfc. Hansen Monte*



# Deep Strike Soldiers learn demo procedures

Story and photos by  
Staff Sgt. Kyle J. Richardson  
41st Fires Brigade, PAO

As the artillery rounds flew overhead, Soldiers with the 2nd Battalion, 20th Field Artillery Regiment continued to press forward and train, Aug. 11.

The Soldiers in the 2nd Bat., 20th Field Artillery Regt., also known as "Deep Strike," learned the proper procedures on the emergency destruction of the multiple launch rocket system's pods on the artillery range.

"Emergency detonation training is very valuable training," said Sgt. 1st Class James Platt, native of Tulsa, Okla., fires platoon sergeant for Battery C, 2nd Bat., 20th Field Artillery Regt. "If we're out somewhere and we have to leave the expended pods for one reason or another, we would have to do an emergency detonation so the enemy



Deep Strike Soldiers with support from the 704th Ordnance Disposal Company (EOD), blew up two multiple launch rocket system pods during an emergency destruction or launcher pods at the artillery range on Fort Hood, Texas, Tuesday. The instructors informed Soldiers on how to destroy pods to keep the enemy from using the pods for wrong.

couldn't use our equipment or booby-trap it."

Two Soldiers from the 704th Explosive Ordnance Disposal Company came out to properly train more than 30

MLRS crew members on how to handle and place the plastic explosive known as C-4 on the pods.

"It's important for the guys starting out to know what to do and what not to do," said Staff Sgt. David Hughee, New York City native, operations noncommissioned officer for the 704th Ord. Company (EOD).

"Safety is paramount out here," said Staff Sgt. Randell Evans, Abilene, Texas native, battalion master gunner for 2nd Bat., 20th Field Artillery Regt. "We want to make sure everyone get something from the training, but we also want to make sure everyone goes home with all of their fingers and toes."

Evans planned the training and arranged for the EOD team to come out to give the training.

"Who better to come out and give instructions on blowing up stuff besides the experts?"



Staff Sgt. Randell Evans, Abilene, Texas native, battalion master gunner for 2nd Battalion, 20th Field Artillery Regiment, and Lt. Col. Brian Hammer, battalion commander for the 2nd Bat., 20th Field Artillery Regt., inspect the damage of the destroyed missile pods at an artillery range on Fort Hood, Texas, Aug. 11. The Deep Strike Soldiers attended emergency destruction of the multiple launched rocket systems pods training for two days.

*See DEMO on Page 5*



*DEMO cont. from Page 4*

Sgt. Kevin Walters, Orange County, Calif. native, 704th Ord. Company (EOD), gave the crew members detailed instructions on how to place the C-4 and prepare the detonation cord.

"I've provided a step-by-step packet, it's written out in great detail so they can easily understand it and follow directions, that way, no one gets hurt," said Walters.

Evans stated that ED is an important skill that every MLRS crew member should be familiar with. The training extended over two days and some of the Soldiers got to experience what four small blocks of C-4 could do.

"It's cool blowing up the pods; it's something we all need to learn and something we all need hands-on with," said Spc. Jeff Queen, MLRS gunner, 2nd



Sgt. David Summer, native of Emmitt, Ida., multiple launch rocket systems crew chief, 2nd Battalion, 20th Field Artillery Regiment, along with Sgt. George Schwarz, Hot Springs, Ark., native, MLRS crew chief, prepare the detonation cord for the plastic explosives used to blow the MLRS pods during the pod emergency destruction training at an artillery range on Fort Hood, Texas, Aug. 11.

Bat., 20th Field Artillery Regt.

During the training, the Soldiers learned how to place the C-4, apply the blasting caps to the detonation cords, handle the detonation cord, cut and place the detonation cord, and move to a safe

distance.

Being aware of the daunting heat and keeping safety a priority, the Deep Strike Soldiers completed their tasks at hand and reduced the launcher pods to several piles of unusable rubble.



Sgt. Kevin Walters, native of Orange County, Calif., 704th Ordinance Company (EOD), prepares the pressure trigger that will attach to the end of the detonation cord attached to the C-4 set to blow the multiple launch rocket systems pods at an artillery range on Fort Hood, Texas.



Staff Sgt. David Hughee, New York City native, operations noncommissioned officer for the 704th Ord. Company (EOD) walks Soldiers through the proper placement of the plastic explosives and the detonation cord during the emergency pod destruction class at an artillery range on Fort Hood, Texas, Aug. 11



# Warrior's blood from Deep Strike

Story and photos by  
Staff Sgt. Kyle Richardson  
41st Fires Brigade, PAO

Soldiers from the "Warrior" Battery, 2nd Battalion, 20th Field Artillery Regiment, 41st Fires Brigade, hosted their first Armed Service Blood Drive for the year located in the battalion's class room on Fort Hood, Texas, Aug. 11.

The unit's recent deployment motivated Capt. DeCarlos Ware, battery commander, 2nd Bat., 20th Field Artillery Regt., 41st Fires Bde., to organize the blood drive.

Perry Jefferies, Blood Donor Recruiter, Robertson Blood Center, stated blood drives serve as good examples of how units can support blood donors even when recently redeployed from overseas contingency operations.

The 17 units of blood collected during the drive will possibly be used to support Soldiers down range and in the Fort Hood area.

The blood collected during blood drives is only good for approximately 42 days. According to the American Red Cross Web site, more than 38,000 blood donations are needed every day. Reoccurring drives helps to keep the supply numbers high in case of an emergency.

"One unit of blood helps to save two lives," said Staff Sgt. Marcus Menchaca, San Antonio native, medical lab technician at the Robertson Blood Center. "Most of the blood that

we receive will arrive in theatre within four to five days."

Donors are screened before they are allowed to donate blood for safety precautions for the donors and the donor recipients.

"It's good to help out a fellow Soldier," said Pvt. Tad Sul-lenger, native of Belvidere, Tenn., Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 2nd Bat., 20th Field Artillery Regt., administrative specialist. "I feel productive when I give blood."

A multitude of Soldiers lined up to donate blood during the drive. The crowd ranged from first time donors to seasoned veterans of the stress ball pump.

"This is my first time giving blood and surprisingly, it didn't hurt," said Pvt. Kith McCarr, Orlando native, HHB, 2nd Bat., 20th Field Artillery Regt. "The small prick of the needle is nothing compared to how valuable this pint of blood is to a Soldier in need."

Everyone who donated blood gave for different personal reasons but most Soldiers agreed they received satisfaction knowing that their small donation and sacrifice will be used to help a comrade deployed or even local.

"I haven't been able to do-



1st Lt. Robert Fonseca, native of Corpus Christi, Texas, Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 2nd Battalion, 20th Field Artillery Regiment, squeezes a stress ball to prepare his vein for a blood donation during the Armed Services Blood Drive held in the battalion's class room, Aug. 11.

nate blood because of my deployment cycles but, I like giving blood," said Pvt. Richard Lee, HHB, 2nd Bat., 20th Field Artillery Regt., communication specialist. "I think it's the right thing to do. We have a lot of deployed Soldiers right now who need it."

Soldiers who gave blood have to wait for approximately 10 minutes for observations. During the waiting period, Soldiers are encouraged to eat cookies and drink juice to get their strength up. Soldiers who gave during the drive also walked away with a free t-shirt.

After the blood donations are collected, donors are not allowed to donate blood again for 56 days, giving the body a chance to replenish.

Units desiring to organize its own blood drive like the 2nd. Bat., 20th Field Artillery Regt., can contact the Robertson Blood Center or Soldiers can visit the center Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. to donate.



# *Throughout the Brigade*



## ***Rail Gunners***







# Re-enlistments

## 2-20FA

Spc. Tiffany Jade Youngblood

Staff Sgt. Jovalyne Hesus Rafael

# Promotions

## To SSG

Sgt. Lamont M. Barerfieldpeace

## To SGT

Spc. Rene D. Caldwell  
Spc. Darrel Cavalier  
Spc. Santana T. Darby  
Spc. Joseph Frazier  
Spc. Micah R. Fuson  
Spc. Adam S. Newey

## To SPC

Pfc. Andre J. Figueroa  
Pfc. Jonathan Sharpless

## To PFC

Pvt. Mackenzie Miller

Want more news and information, become a  
Facebook fan of the 41st Fires BDE